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The International American Conference.

The plans for the International Conference of the American republics, which is to meet in Mexico City on the 22d of October, are now well advanced. Secretary Hay has received assurances that every one of the eighteen governments has accepted in good faith the cordial invitation of President Diaz of Mexico to take part in the Conference, and that preparations for representation are nearly completed. It is expected that the Bureau of American Republics, which is acting as the Committee of Arrangements, will have the names of all the delegates during this month.

Arbitration will, it is expected, be the principal subject before the Conference. The other subjects on the provisional program are: an international court of claims; measures for the protection of industry, agriculture and commerce, and for the development of means of communication between the countries; and the reorganization of the Bureau of American Republics. It is left optional with the Conference whether its action on the subject of arbitration shall be retroactive, as demanded by Peru and Bolivia, or confined to future disputes, as desired by Chile.

This Conference is certain to be the most important international political gathering ever convened on the Western Continent. It has had two predecessors, —

the Panama Congress of 1826, and the Washington Congress of 1889-90. It ought to be able to accomplish the two great projects which were before the Congress twelve years ago, but which both failed of realization. The powerful effort made by Mr. Blaine for closer commercial relations failed because the United States would not make what the South American delegates considered proper concessions in regard to our protective tariff. The South American statesmen were too clever to enter into an agreement where the concessions were desired to be so largely on one side. This difficulty is certain to be great in the coming Conference, but the reciprocity provisions in our present tariff will make it much easier of solution than it was in 1889. On the solution of this matter will depend very largely the success of any scheme for better means of communication, for the commercial relations and the means of intercommunication are only different sides of the same question.

In the matter of arbitration there ought to be no serious difficulty. There was never any particular reason why the treaty of arbitration drawn by the Washington Conference in 1890 failed of ratification. It seems to have lapsed simply because general interest in the subject, on the part both of public men and of private citizens, was not strong enough to induce the governments to ratify it. But arbitration, as a practical means of settling controversies between nations, has made long strides since the Washington Conference met. In the twelve years since that time, almost as many disputes have been settled by this means as in the whole of the preceding part of the nineteenth century. This new American Conference also follows right on the heels of the Hague Conference and the setting up of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. This great accomplishment makes it practically certain that the Mexico City Conference will adopt some arbitration project which will be ratified by the American governments. This, we are sure, is the one great object which Mr. Hay had in view when he suggested the Conference.

Just what form the arbitration scheme will take cannot now be foretold. The treaty of 1890 was so framed as to permit the European countries to become parties to it. The United States and Mexico are parties to the Hague Treaty and the International Court. The thing, therefore, which it seems ought naturally to be done is the drafting of a treaty by which all the nineteen American republics shall pledge themselves to submit differences between them, which